



Read-Aloud Guidelines

M-STEP Mathematics and English Language Arts

Spring 2015

April 2015

The M-STEP mathematics and English language arts (ELA) assessments have a text-to-speech designated support option for online test administrations. Students that do not have access to this support or take a paper/pencil test may utilize the Read-Aloud designated support. Designated supports are options available to all students that may need additional support to access the test content.

The Read Aloud support is administered by a person (human reader) who provides an oral presentation of the assessment text to an eligible student. The student depends on the reader to read the test questions accurately, pronounce words correctly, and speak in a clear voice throughout the test. The reader must be trained and qualified and must follow the *M-STEP Read-Aloud Guidelines* presented here. The guiding principle in reading aloud is to ensure that the student has access to test content.

Readers are allowable across all grades as a **designated support** for M-STEP Math and ELA assessment test questions, answer options, and Performance Task source materials. Readers are also allowable for ELA reading passages as a **documented accommodation** in grades 6 - 8, and 11. Note that this accommodation is appropriate for a very small number of students (estimated to be approximately 1-2% of students with disabilities participating in a general assessment, this number is not a cap but an anticipated percentage of student need). For information on documentation requirements and decision-making criteria for using readers and all other M-STEP Assessment resources please see the *Supports and Accommodations Table and Manual* at www.michigan.gov/mstep.

Please note that there are no Reader Scripts for the M-STEP Math and ELA assessments making the review and usage of these guidelines a requirement for providing this support to students.

For additional questions, please contact the Office of Standards & Assessment at 877-560-8378.

Reader Qualifications

Readers must be:

- an adult who is familiar with the student, and who is typically responsible for providing this support during educational instruction and assessments.
- trained on the administration of the assessment in accordance with state policy, and familiar with the terminology and symbols specific to the test content and related conventions for standard oral communication.
- trained in accordance with M-Step and state administration and security policies and procedures as articulated in Consortium and state test administration manuals, guidelines, and related documentation.



Preparation

Readers must:

- read and sign the OSA Security Compliance Form prior to test administration. This form was packaged with materials but is also available on the [MDE Secure Site](#) and [M-STEP website](#).
- familiarize themselves with the test environment and format in advance of the testing session. Having a working familiarity with the test environment and format will help facilitate reading of the test.
- have a strong working knowledge of the embedded and non-embedded accessibility and accommodations options and features available on M-STEP assessments.
- be familiar with any assistive technology or approved supports the student requires. In addition to a reader, students may make use of any other approved specialized tools or equipment during the test as appropriate and in accordance with the *Supports and Accommodations Table*.
- have extensive practice in providing read aloud support and must be familiar and comfortable with the process before working directly with a student.
- be knowledgeable of procedures for reading aloud text by content area (see Table 1: Reader Guidance for Mathematics).
- The reader should meet with the student in advance and inform the student of the parameters of the support. A suggested test preparation script is included at the end of the M-STEP Read Aloud Guidelines.
- Unless otherwise specified by a student's IEP or 504 plan, the reader does not have a role in manipulating the test or assisting with any other support tools. Readers should be ready with appropriate test preparation scripts that reinforces the parameters during the test session.

General Guidelines

- The test reader's support should ideally be provided in a separate setting so as not to interfere with the instruction or assessment of other students.
- Read each question exactly as written as clearly as possible.
- Throughout the exam, strive to communicate in a neutral tone and maintain a neutral facial expression and posture.
- Avoid gesturing, head movements, or any verbal or non-verbal emphasis on words not otherwise emphasized in text.
- Avoid conversing with the student about test questions as this would be a violation of test security; respond to the student's questions by repeating the item, words or instructions verbatim as needed.
- Do not paraphrase, interpret, define, or translate any items, words, or instructions as this would be a violation of test security.
- Spell any words requested by the student.
- Adjust your reading speed and volume if requested by the student.



Post-Administration

- The test reader must collect scratch paper, rough drafts, and login information immediately at the end of the testing session and deliver it to the test administrator in accordance with M-STEP Math and ELA state policies and procedures. Please refer to the Test Administrator Manual for more information related the administration requirements of the assessments.
- The test reader must not discuss any portion of the test with others.

English Usage/Conventions

- **Punctuation:** Read all text as punctuated.
- **Ellipses:** When an ellipsis is used to signify missing text in a sentence, pause briefly, and read as “dot, dot, dot.”
- **Quotations:** Quotation marks should be verbalized as “quote” and “end quote” at the beginning and end of quoted material, respectively.
- **Emphasis:** When words are printed in boldface, italics, or capitals, tell the student that the words are printed that way. In order not to provide an unfair advantage to students receiving this support, test readers should be cautious not to emphasize words not already emphasized in print. Emphasis is appropriate when italics, underlining, or bold is used in the prompt, question, or answers.
- **Misspellings:** In some cases a test item may present a word or phrase that is intentionally misspelled as part of the assessment. In these instances the student is required to respond in a specific way. When presented with intentionally misspelled words test readers should not attempt to read the word(s) aloud as pronunciation is somewhat subjective.

Images / Graphics

- Before describing a picture or graphic, the reader should determine whether the details of the picture are necessary to understanding and responding to the item(s). In many cases, an image will be used to accompany a passage or reading excerpt as a piece of visual interest that is not essential in responding to the item.
- Describe the image/graphic as concisely as possible following a logical progression. Focus on providing necessary information and ignoring the superfluous. Use grade-appropriate language when describing the image/graphic.
- Read the title or caption, if available.
- Any text that appears in the body of an image may be read to a student. Read text in images in the order most suited for the student’s needs. Often the reader moves top to bottom, left to right, or general to specific in accordance with teaching practices.



Performance Task Source Materials and Passages

Performance Task source materials is a Designated Support for all grade levels. However, for students in grades 6-8, and 11, whose IEP has read aloud as an accommodation for the M-STEP ELA test, the following guidelines must be followed when reading passages are read aloud:

- Read the source material or passage in its entirety as punctuated (e.g., pauses at periods; raised intonation for questions). Do not verbalize punctuation marks other than ellipsis and quotation marks as noted above.
- If the student requires or asks for a specific section of the source material passage to be re-read with the punctuation indicated, the test reader should re-read those specific lines within the source material passage and indicate all punctuation found within those lines as many times as requested by the student.
- When test questions refer to particular lines of a source material or passage, read the lines referenced as though they are part of the stem.

Graphic Organizers

- Before reading a graphic organizer, the test reader should discern the most appropriate and logical manner in which to present the information. In general, information should be presented from broad to specific as indicated by the visual components of the document. The test reader should read the terms exactly as indicated in the graphic organizer.
- The reader should read the terms exactly as indicated in the graphic organizer. No other information about should be articulated. For example, the reader should not create sentences if information is bulleted or appears in a title or label.
- Use common grade-appropriate language throughout the item and the test when referring to graphic organizers and their attributes (labels, blank cells, stems, etc.).

Mathematical Expressions

- Mathematical expressions must be read precisely and with care to avoid misrepresentation by a student who has no visual reference. For mathematics items involving algebraic expressions or other mathematical notation, it may be preferable for the reader to silently read the mathematical notations or the entire question before reading it aloud to the student.
- Test readers read mathematical expressions with technical accuracy. Similar expressions should be treated consistently.
- In general, numbers and symbols can be read according to their common English usage for the student's grade level.
- Numbers greater than 99, however, should be read as individual numbers.
- Additional examples may be found in the attached appendix.
- Abbreviations and acronyms should be read as full words. For example, 10 cm needs to be read as "ten centimeters." Some abbreviations may be read differently by different readers. For example, cm^3 may be read as "cubic centimeters" or "centimeters cubed".

Additional examples may be found in the attached appendix.

Table 1. Test Reader Guidance for Mathematics

Numbers

Description	Example(s)	Read as:
Large whole numbers	632,407,981	“six three two comma four zero seven comma nine eight one”
	45,000,689,112	“four five comma zero zero zero comma six eight nine comma one one two”
Decimal numbers	0.056	“zero point zero five six”
	4.37	“four point three seven”
Fractions – common	$\frac{1}{2}, \frac{1}{4}, \frac{2}{3}, \frac{4}{5}$	“one-half, one-fourth, two-thirds, four-fifths” Other common fractions include “sixths, eighths, tenths”
	$\frac{14}{25}$	“fourteen over twenty-five”
	$\frac{487}{6972}$	“four eight seven over six nine seven two”
Mixed numbers – read with “and” between whole numbers and fractions	$3 \frac{1}{2}$	“three and one-half”
	$57 \frac{3}{4}$	“fifty-seven and three-fourths”
Percent	62%	“sixty-two percent”
	7.5%	“seven point five percent”
	0.23%	“zero point two three percent”
Money - if contains a decimal point, read as “dollars AND cents”	\$4.98	“four dollars and ninety-eight cents”
	\$0.33	“thirty-three cents”
	\$5368.00	“five three six eight dollars”
Negative numbers - do NOT read negative sign as “minus”	-3	“negative three”
	$-\frac{5}{8}$	“negative five-eighths”
Dates (years)	1987	“nineteen eighty-seven”
	2005	“two thousand five”

Roman Numerals	I II III IV	"Roman Numeral one" "Roman Numeral two" "Roman Numeral three" "Roman Numeral four"
Ratios	$x:y$	"x to y"

Operations

Description	Example(s)	Read as:
Addition	$\begin{array}{r} 13 \\ + 27 \\ \hline \end{array}$ $13 + 27 =$ $13 + 27 = ?$	"thirteen plus twenty-seven equals" "thirteen plus twenty-seven equals question mark"
Subtraction	$\begin{array}{r} 487 \\ - 159 \\ \hline \end{array}$ $487 - 159 =$ $487 - 159 = ?$	"four eight seven minus one five nine equals" "four eight seven minus one five nine equals question mark"
Multiplication	$\begin{array}{r} 63 \\ \times 49 \\ \hline \end{array}$ $63 \times 49 =$ $63 \times 49 = ?$	"sixty-three times forty-nine equals" "sixty-three times forty-nine equals question mark"
Division – Vertical or Horizontal	$\frac{120}{15} = 8$ $120 \div 15 = 8$	"one two zero divided by fifteen equals eight"
Operations with boxes	$3 + \square = 8$	"three plus box equals eight"

Expressions

Description	Example(s)	Read as:
	$\frac{ t - 2 }{6} \leq 15$ $x^2 y^3 = -36$ $156x \geq 4$	<p>"the absolute value of 't' (pause) minus two (pause) over six is less than or equal to fifteen"</p> <p>"'x' squared 'y' cubed equals negative thirty-six" or "'x' to the second power times 'y' to the third power equals negative thirty-six"</p> <p>"one hundred fifty six 'x' is greater than or equal to four"</p>
Coordinate pairs	the point $(-1, 2)$	"the point (pause) negative one comma two"
Answer choices with no other text	<p>the point A is at $(6, 3)$.</p> <p>A. $(-3, -4)$</p>	<p>"The point 'A' is at (pause) six comma three."</p> <p>"'A' (pause) negative three comma negative four"</p>
Parallels	$\overline{AB} \parallel \overline{CD}$	"line segment AB is parallel to line segment CD"
Perpendiculars	$\overline{AB} \perp \overline{CD}$	"line segment AB is perpendicular to line segment CD"



Suggested Test Reader Script
(used with student in advance of the day of testing)

Hi _____,

I will be reading your test to you when you take your M-STEP Assessment next week in [Math/ELA]. I wanted to let you know how we'll work together. When I'm reading a test to you, it's very different from when I'm reading to you during class time. I have to follow certain rules.

- I cannot help you with any answers.
- I cannot click on anything on the screen.¹
- I will not be using different character voices or changes in my tone when I read. I will be using a very direct voice that does not change very much, no matter how exciting the story or test item gets.
- If there is a picture that has words in it, I will read those words. If you ask, I will re-read the word as well.
- Sometimes there may be something about a word or phrase that might give you a hint if I read it out loud. In those cases, I will skip the word, point to it on screen [or on your booklet if braille or print on demand], and continue to read.
- I can still help you with your [**list any assistive technology that the student may require that would need support – if that support is provided by your].
- You can ask me to re-read parts of the test if you didn't hear me or need more time to think.
- You can ask me to slow down or speed up my reading, or read louder or softer if you are having trouble understanding what I read.
- I will only read certain types of punctuation, but if you need me to re-read a sentence and tell you how it was punctuated, I can do that.
- If you ask me a question about the test all I will say is: "do your best work. I cannot help you with that."
- Do you have any questions for me about how we'll work together during the test?

¹ A reader may click on something on the screen only if this is an identified need in the student's IEP or 504 plan and the reader has received appropriate training on when and how to do so.



References

Educational Testing Service. (2002). *Guidelines for a Test Reader*. Retrieved from ETS Home:

https://www.ets.org/disabilities/test_reader/

Oregon Department of Education Office of Student Learning and Partnerships. (2012, December).

Guidelines for the Read Aloud Accommodation. Retrieved from Oregon Department of Education Home: [http://www.ode.state.or.us/teachlearn/testing/admin/alt/ea/2-guidelines-for-the-math-read-aloud-accommodation-for-2012-2013-\(3\).pdf](http://www.ode.state.or.us/teachlearn/testing/admin/alt/ea/2-guidelines-for-the-math-read-aloud-accommodation-for-2012-2013-(3).pdf)

State of Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. (2013, September). *Access Supports and Accommodations Guidelines for State Assessments*. Retrieved from State of Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction:

<http://www.k12.wa.us/assessment/statetesting/pubdocs/AccommodationManual.pdf>

West Virginia Department of Education. (December, 2013). *West Virginia Department of Education Office of Assessment and Accountability*. Retrieved from West Virginia Guidelines for Participation in State Assessments, 2013-2014: Guidance on Accommodations for Students with Disabilities and/or Limited English Proficiency in State and District-Wide Testing: <http://wvde.state.wv.us/oaa/pdf/ParticipationGuidelines.pdf>